



International
Water Resources
Association

International Water Resources Association

Strategy 2030





Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
Who we are	
2. Our motivation & aims	4
Our vision	
Why our vision matters	
IWRA mission	
IWRA core values	
3. Strategic goals & implementation objectives	7
Goal 1. Create greater value for IWRA Members	
Goal 2. Being 'strategic' in our choice of Strategic Partners	
Goal 3. Deliver organisational outcomes through priority activities	
Goal 4. Secure the long-term financial sustainability of IWRA	
Goal 5. Enhance the global standing and reputation of IWRA	
4. Key outcomes for 2030 and beyond	11
Strategy implementation roadmap	

INTRODUCTION

Over the next decade, IWRA is poised to consolidate and grow its position as a global convenor, facilitator, and advocate for the integration of water science and policy, leading to positive water-related impacts. Through adoption of this Strategy, IWRA commits to serving its members, partners, and the wider global water community by delivering impact – fostering cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary dialogue, building capacity, disseminating knowledge, facilitating innovation, and championing sustainable and equitable water solutions. This Strategy outlines IWRA's revised vision and mission, and high-level goals and implementation objectives required to deliver these over the next five years.

WHO WE ARE

IWRA was established in 1971 as an international, multidisciplinary membership Association. It is dedicated to integrating scientific research and evidence-based policy to improve sustainable and equitable water resources practice and management worldwide. We foster international, cross-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary communication and practices. We are non-partisan and evidence based, and our culture is grounded in respect, transparency, collaboration, and equal opportunity.

OUR MOTIVATION & AIMS

OUR VISION

A water-secure world where science and policy are integrated for the benefit of people and the environment

Explanation of the components of the Vision statement:

- The phrase “water-secure world” refers to the ideal society and environment everyone at IWRA would like to achieve.
- The phrase “science and policy are integrated” emphasises IWRA's core strength in, and focuses on, the science-to-policy interface.
- The phrase “for the benefit of people and environment” expresses IWRA's belief that what we do should ultimately produce benefits for people and the environment. When connected with the rest of the vision statement, those benefits are understood to be in the form of healthy people and the natural environment.

WHY OUR VISION MATTERS

Integrating water science and policy is essential for closing persistent gaps in knowledge, evidence-based decision-making, and policy implementation. Better integration will result in policy based on the best-available science and more robust and defensible implementation by public institutions, civil society organisations, and the private sector. It will also stimulate pos-

itive feedback loops that prioritise research on real-world needs, thereby accelerating progress to achieve sustainable and equitable water solutions. By serving as a forum for global dialogue, IWRA can facilitate connections among disciplines, sectors and geographies to enhance water-related benefits for people, economies, and the natural environment worldwide.

IWRA MISSION

Our Mission sets out our aspirations and how we will work to achieve the Vision set out above. We will:

Inspire intellectual curiosity and the advancement of water knowledge, strengthen the water science-policy interface, support IWRA members and partners, convene a cross-disciplinary global community, and bolster the capacity for evidence-based decision making, in the pursuit of our Vision.

Explanation of the components of the revised Mission statement:

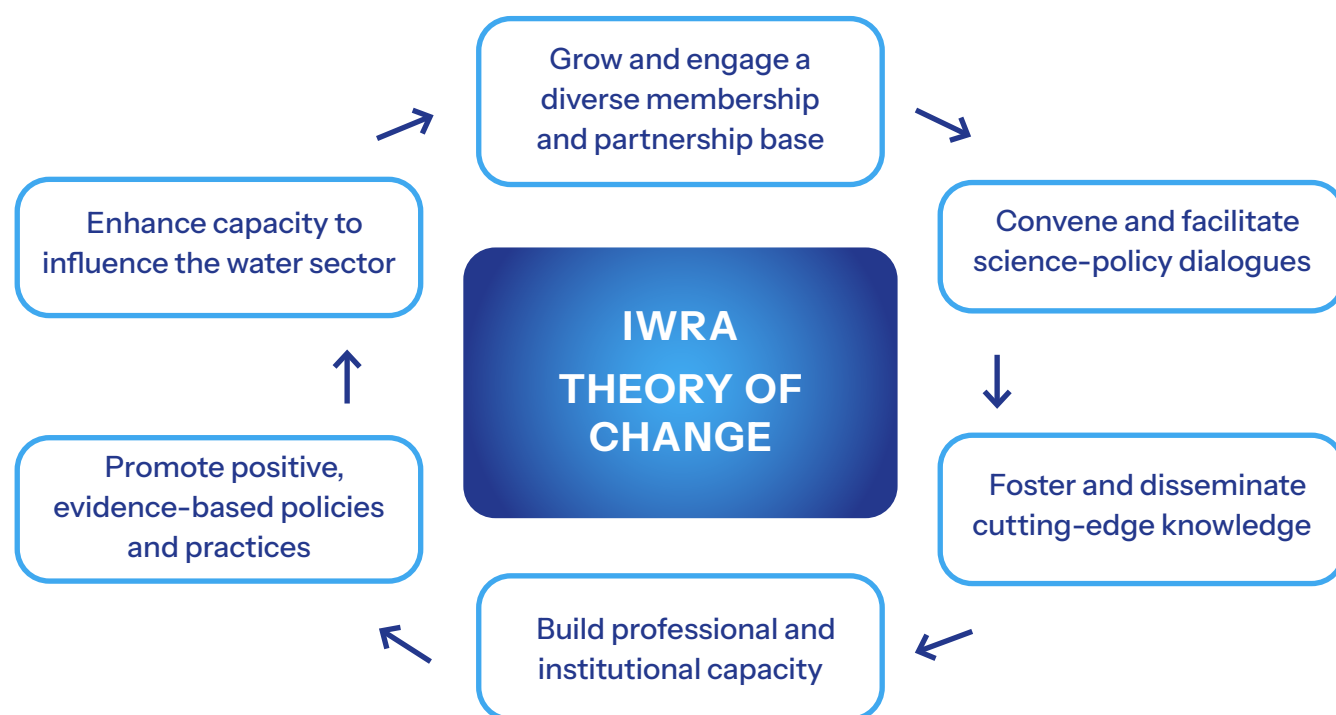
- The phrase “inspire intellectual curiosity and the advancement of water knowledge” reflects IWRA’s fundamental commitment to all aspects and disciplines of water research and policy development, and acknowledges IWRA’s strengths in facilitating, exchanging, and synthesising knowledge related to the world water resources
- The phrase “strengthen the water science-policy interface” emphasises the Association’s objective of continuing to pursue and fortify its core focus and chief distinguishing feature—the science-policy interface.
- The phrase “support IWRA members and partners” emphasises that IWRA members and partners are the focus and primary beneficiaries of the Association and its activities.
- The phrase “convene a cross-disciplinary global community” recognises firstly IWRA’s strength in, and international reputation for bringing the right people and organisations together, and secondly, emphasises that the Association is composed of a broad array of experts and professionals from a variety of disciplines, fields, experiences, and professions.

- The phrase “bolster capacity for evidence-based decision-making” highlights IWRA’s efforts over five decades to influence evidence-based policy outcomes implemented by individuals, institutions, and governments.
- Promote positive, evidence-based policies and practices;
- Create and enhance opportunities to influence the water sector; and
- Pursue the above objectives with the primary goal of benefitting IWRA members.

This Mission is based on a Theory of Change¹ that engages and leverages IWRA’s global network and expertise to:

- Grow and engage a diverse member and partner base, including early-career professionals and underrepresented communities with capacity constraints;
- Convene and facilitate dialogues on water science and policy;
- Foster and disseminate cutting-edge knowledge;
- Build professional and institutional capacity;

In summary, by engaging IWRA’s diverse membership and producing actionable knowledge, we will build capacity to improve decisions and institutions that deliver equitable and sustainable water outcomes. Through these high-level initiatives, IWRA intends to advance sustainable and equitable water solutions, elevate the organisation’s global standing, and fortify its viability and resilience.



¹ This “Theory of change” describes how the cyclical stages and actions described therein will lead to the desired, long-term impact (our Vision). It goes beyond a simple list of tasks by outlining the causal chain, including the necessary preconditions and outcomes, and the underlying assumptions connecting these activities to the ultimate goal.

IWRA CORE VALUES

**Respect, transparency, collaboration, and equal access;
International, cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary, and
interdisciplinary approach;
Non-partisan and evidence-based approach.**

STRATEGIC GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES²

The success of this strategy rests on the effective and efficient achievement of five interconnected goals. These goals are: value for members; strategic partnerships; priority activities; financial sustainability, and; IWRA recognition and standing. The goals are informed and directed by the recent board-member questionnaire. Moreover, they

fully align with IWRA's Mission, and define the outcomes and impacts to be achieved for members, partners, water-dependent communities and environments, and for the Association itself, over the next five years.



Ministerial Roundtable during XIX World Water Congress

²Goals are 'what' needs to be achieved, while 'objectives' refer broadly to 'how' the goals will be implemented (full details will be captured in supporting strategies and plans developed by Board Committees tasked with this responsibility, and in the Annual Operational Plan developed by the Executive Office).

GOAL 1. CREATE GREATER VALUE FOR IWRA MEMBERS

Implementation objectives – pathways & considerations:

- 1. Create more opportunities for IWRA activities to be led and undertaken by members, especially financial members**
 - a. Greater shift of ‘operational governance’ to member-led activities³
 - b. Stream-line Board approval pathways for activities led by Members
 - c. Review, re-think and re-vitalise existing delivery pathways and mechanisms (Task Forces, regional chapters, thematic groups, etc.)⁴
- 2. Enhanced opportunities and benefits for ‘financial’ Members**
 - a. Implement according to the latest Membership strategy/plan (prepared by the Membership committee), upgraded as and when required
 - b. Greater awareness and focus on professional development opportunities for members, especially youth and ‘minority-group’ members (linked to Goal 3)
- 3. Greater recognition of Member work, inside and outside of IWRA**
 - a. Effective and more regular promotion of member activities and achievements
 - b. Enhance recognition and standing of major IWRA Awards and their winners
 - c. Over time, expanding annual (new) IWRA awards by region and category

GOAL 2. BEING ‘STRATEGIC’ IN OUR CHOICE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Implementation objectives – pathways & considerations:

- 1. Target high-value⁵ strategic partnerships**
 - a. Priority should be given to partnerships that strongly enhance the impact, standing and/or financial resilience of IWRA
 - b. the costs and benefits – financial and non-financial – should be assessed before entering into, or renewing, a strategic partnership (linked to Goal 5)
 - c. Consider initiating this objective through a review of all existing partnerships
- 2. Develop and implement a plan for Private sector partnerships**
 - a. An important, yet largely ‘untapped’ development and adoption pathway for IWRA knowledge products, as well as being a potential area of revenue diversity and growth (strongly linked to Goal 5) requiring further consideration
 - b. Review and survey IWRA’s private partnership offer and fill ‘value gaps’ in the offer that are required/expected by prospective private sector partners
- 3. Consider alliances as a practical alternative to partnerships**
 - a. While both are collaborative in nature, partnerships will more often involve a contractual undertaking (e.g. to hold a congress, or to develop a technical/policy report) or, a clear expectation of signifi-

³Operational governance is the framework of rules, processes, and structures that ensures an organisation’s activities are efficient, compliant, and directly aligned with its overarching strategic goals.

⁴Noting that review work in some of these areas has already commenced due to earlier agreements.

⁵High value refers to any activity, including partnering, that helps IWRA deliver its goals in a highly effective and efficient manner. In most cases, they will require higher effort to successfully deliver.

cant contribution of time and effort from IWRA staff and members to be successful

- b. An alliance is typically a more flexible, co-operative agreement where both ‘partners’ contribute limited resources (typically time and possibly some travel costs) to undertake shared dialogue, planning or similar
- c. The appropriate number and balance of partnerships and alliances should be considered as part of on-going planning by the Board and the Partnerships Committee

GOAL 3. DELIVER ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES THROUGH PRIORITY ACTIVITIES⁶

Implementation objectives – pathways & considerations:

1. Partner-funded Congresses

- a. World Water Congress to remain the highest priority due to being both high impact and our major revenue source, however congresses should be undertaken with reduced cost and greater delivery efficiency. This will require careful consideration by the Executive Office and Board.
- b. Extend congress offering on a regional or thematic basis (already includes Islands Water Congress), but only on a sustainable personnel and financial basis

2. Knowledge Products

- a. Ensure a fully integrated IWRA ‘knowledge assets’ portfolio across all knowledge products, viz. *Water International*, Policy Briefs, Technical reports, etc.
- b. Continue to grow the reach and impact of

Water International

- c. Develop knowledge products consistent with the strategy or plan developed by relevant Board Committee(s)
- d. Seek opportunities to develop knowledge products funded by partners

3. Networking and Information Services

- a. Continue development of IWRA’s on-line member platform, adding high value features in response to member surveys and marketing. These features could include collaborative platforms that can be directly accessed by members undertaking IWRA activities.
- b. Promote member activities and achievements (linked to Goal 1)
- c. Extend knowledge and information sharing through social media and other channels

4. Training and Capacity Building

- a. Seek opportunities to deliver tailored trainings to partners and members, based on surveys and marketing. These activities should be run on a fee-paying basis, although subsidies for participation by Youth/Early Career Professionals and minority member groups should be an aim
- b. Consider development of a new ‘Training and Capacity Building’ Committee to plan and guide activities

5. Governance and Management

- a. A ‘continuous improvement’ approach to organisational governance and management ‘business’ practices should be adopted, based on ‘best practice’ for similar non-profit associations

⁶Priority’ activities i-v are listed in expected order of relative effort and budgetary cost (based on questionnaire results)

- b. The staffing capacity of the Executive Office should be reviewed from time to time to ensure sustainable alignment with the type and magnitude of necessary work being undertaken

GOAL 4. SECURE THE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF IWRA

Implementation objectives – pathways & considerations:

1. Improve resilience through the growth and diversification of revenue sources
 - a. Medium-term aim should be to reduce dependence on the World Water Congress as IWRA's largest revenue source
 - b. The process of revenue diversification should be informed by a 'commercially-savvy' strategy, to be developed by the Finance Committee, that includes requirements and pathways for developing relationships with private sector partners (linked to Goal 2) and other innovative revenue pathways
2. Establish and grow a financial reserve, at a level agreed annually by the Board through the annual budgeting process.
 - a. The primary purposes of the financial reserve will be to provide a buffer for periods of 'tight' operational cash-flow and for developing important new programmes and initiatives identified by the Board
 - b. Meeting the annual target will require disciplined focus each year on agreed activities and deliverables, and building a 'continuous improvement' culture that addresses operational efficiency and improved business systems

⁷Several potential priority themes were identified through the 2026 Board questionnaire.

GOAL 5. ENHANCE THE GLOBAL STANDING AND REPUTATION OF IWRA

Implementation objectives – pathways & considerations:

1. Continue to develop and promote IWRA as a widely-recognised thought leader, and the go-to place/platform to communicate and discuss water system science and policy
 - a. Largely based on outputs and outcomes arising from Goals 1-3, with specific promotional campaigns being valuable from time to time
2. IWRA elevates water as an issue of global concern, influencing key policies and institutions
 - a. Each year, identify a global issue of concern or emerging theme to guide development of special publications and other knowledge products⁷
 - b. Promote this issue and associated knowledge products through IWRA partnerships, webinars, events (on-line and face-to-face), and social media



IWRA President Yuanyuan Li attends the 50th anniversary of IHP and 60 years of the Water Sciences Division.

KEY OUTCOMES FOR 2030 AND BEYOND

Successful achievement of the Strategic Goals outlined in section 3, will link directly to Key Outcomes that should be delivered by IWRA by 2030. These are:

1. A larger, more representative, and more engaged network of members, working to support IWRA activities for mutual benefit, across all continents⁸
2. A cohort of strategic partners who benefit from IWRA convening power, collaborations, knowledge products and services, and who provide us with adoption and recognition pathways to support activities and, wherever possible, with financial resources to support IWRA's continuing work and impact
3. A continually growing portfolio of high quality and widely adopted IWRA knowledge assets (people and products), with clear and measurable evidence of impact on water security policy and actions, globally and regionally
4. Greater revenue diversity, long-term financial sustainability, and improved governance and business practices
5. An organisational culture – across members and staff – that values innovative approaches, member-led initiatives, devolved responsibilities, simplified processes, and effective and efficient operations and activities

6. Overall, IWRA is more highly regarded and valued by all stakeholders, especially by members and partners

Positive 'actions and results' in achieving these outcomes should be integrated with the annual Board Work Plan, and monitored and reported annually, starting from 2026.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

IWRA will develop a three-year rolling Implementation Roadmap, that is updated annually. It will identify key tasks, capabilities and resources, as well as groups and sectors within and outside IWRA necessary for advancing this Strategy.

Specific implementation actions will be captured and resourced within the annual operational plan and budget, which will be developed by the management team (Executive Office) with support from relevant committees, and approved by the Board.

⁸Antarctica might need to be held over for future strategies



Contact

IWRA Executive Office
22 rue de Madrid
75008 Paris
France

Tel: +33 6 44 20 57 53

Email: office@iwra.org

iwra.org

worldwatercongress.com

islandswatercongress.org



IWRA

International
Water Resources
Association

